

After-Death Planning

Adapted from

Death to Dust: What Happens to Dead Bodies?

2nd edition

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Do I have a choice about what happens to me after death? Yes!

You may normally have your body disposed of in any reasonable manner. "Reasonable" is the operative word, and *you must make your wishes known.*

***For instructions to be followed after death,
someone has to know about them in advance!***

How to use this report

Charles Lindbergh, the first man to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, laid out exactly how he wanted to be buried, what the funeral was to be like, and what hymns he wanted sung. As soon as he died, his wishes were carried out: he was dressed in his normal clothes and buried, without embalming, in a plain wooden coffin.

On the other hand, former President Franklin D. Roosevelt left a four-page letter with explicit instructions for his funeral. He wanted a very simple funeral with no hearse, lying in state, or embalming. Burial was to be in an unlined grave in a plain wooden casket. Unfortunately, these instructions were found in his safe—three days after his elaborate funeral and burial.

This document allows you to express your wishes about your body's disposal. This information will assure your family and friends that they have done what you wanted. It will also help them to avoid sales pressures from casket, cemetery, and funeral salespersons.

Optimally, you will first complete the form. ***Then discuss it with your relatives or whomever will make your funeral arrangements.*** Give them a copy of the form, filled in by you, and keep a copy in the records that will be opened immediately after your death. (Not in a safe-deposit box.)

Body Disposal Instructions and Discussion Guide

Full Name _____

Maiden/Other Name _____

Usual Address _____

Birth Place _____

Birth Date _____ Social Security Number _____

Spouse's Full Name _____

Spouse's Address (if not living together) _____

Spouse's Phone Number _____

Spouse's Birth Date _____ Birth Place _____

Date of Spouse's Death _____ Wedding Date _____

Wedding Place _____

1. How you should dispose of my body:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interred (buried), not embalmed | <input type="checkbox"/> Interred (buried), embalmed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cremated, not embalmed | <input type="checkbox"/> Cremated, after embalming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do above <i>after</i> organ/tissue donation | <input type="checkbox"/> Donate entire body (precludes organ donation) |

2. I wish to donate:

- My entire body for research, study, or transplant
- Any organs or tissues that can be used for transplantation, research, or study
- These specific organs or tissues:
 - Corneas (eyes)
 - Liver
 - Pancreas
 - Bone
 - Heart/lungs
 - Kidney
 - Skin
 - Other _____

- I have already made arrangements for this with:

3. I do or do not have funeral or burial insurance.

The policy is with (company) _____

The policy number is _____

4. I prefer the following funeral home or funeral director:

They have or have not been previously contracted.

5. I prefer my hair and makeup be prepared by the following individuals:

hair _____

makeup _____

funeral home no preference

6. I want to be dressed in: _____

Shroud only Shroud over clothing No preference

7. I would like to be buried with (jewelry, favorite possessions, etc): _____

8. I prefer a:

funeral (with the body present) memorial (without the body present)

open casket or closed casket no formal service

9. I prefer to have any service held:

in a church/mosque/synagogue at the funeral home/crematorium

at the graveside only at home

somewhere else (specify) _____

10. I want the ceremony to be (choose all that apply):

religious military/veteran secular

fraternal order (type) _____

11. I want the service run by a (enter name if known):

minister _____

priest _____

rabbi _____

other _____

12. I have a preference for:

music _____

readings _____

prayers _____

other _____

13. I prefer a publicly announced or family-only funeral or memorial service.

14. I do or do not want "calling hours," with or without an open casket.

15. I want these people to act as pallbearers (list as many as desired, use separate sheet if necessary):

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

16. I want to be interred (buried) at (name cemetery):

17. I own a plot or a mausoleum.

The deed for the plot/mausoleum is kept _____

It is in the name of _____

18. I do or do not want to be buried with anyone else.

If with someone, who? _____

19. I want a specific type of:

Casket _____

Vault _____

Grave marker _____

20. I want this written on my marker: _____

21. I want this symbol/decoration on my marker: _____

None

22. I do or do not want a veteran's marker.

23. Military service:

I was in the (branch of military) _____

from _____ to _____

I was discharged at (place) _____

on (date) _____

My discharge papers are located _____

24. If cremated, I want this done with my ashes:

Inurned Buried Kept at home

Scattered (specify site) _____

Other _____

25. I want a specific type of:

Urn _____

Columbarium _____

26. Notify the following people of my death (list as many as desired, use separate sheet if necessary):

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

27. I prefer to have or not to have the following people at my funeral, if possible (list as many as desired, use separate sheet if necessary):

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Come to funeral Not come to funeral

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Come to funeral Not come to funeral

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Come to funeral Not come to funeral

28. Other family and friends are listed in:

Address book, located _____

Rolodex, located _____

Computer listing, located _____

accessed by typing _____

29. I want mourners to send:

Flowers Nothing

Donations to _____

30. I want something special in my obituary: _____

31. Send copies of the obituary to the following periodicals (newspapers, professional organizations, newsletters, etc.):

32. I have a cost limit on any of the services mentioned above:

33. My lawyer is:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

34. My life insurance company/agent is:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

35. My will is located at: _____

36. The executor of my estate is:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

37. The key location or lock code to access my:

Cars _____

House _____

Home safe _____

Home desk _____

Home files _____

Office safe _____

Office desk _____

Office files _____

Locker _____

Briefcase _____

Safe-deposit box _____

Other safe/locker _____

38. The location of other valuable property (cash, jewelry, art, furs, stocks, etc.) is:

39. Other instructions:

Note: If you have financial or other essential records on your computer, either teach someone how to access them or leave detailed instructions to follow. Be sure to leave someone your passwords, PIN numbers, and other security information.

Now What?

After you have completed this form, take the time to *discuss your preferences with those who will be entrusted with fulfilling these last wishes*. You want them to understand why you made certain choices, so they can feel more comfortable and be prepared to carry them out.

You must discuss your desire to donate organs, tissues, or your entire body. Unless your next of kin agree, it rarely matters that you have filled out an organ/tissue donor form, signed the back of your driver's license, or completed a living will—they must give their assent for donation to occur. *Talk with them*. That way, your wishes will be fulfilled.

Educators and Professionals

This form makes a great discussion guide for classroom or patient/client use.
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